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ABSTRACT

This paper describes how two white, female teacher educators openly addressed white racism with their white preservice students in order to help them become more aware of the advantages and biases inherent in their positionality as white teachers. They sought to move students past feelings of guilt and helplessness and avoid the dominant culture resentment against cultures of color. They helped student teachers open up to discourses of white racism and move beyond feelings of defensiveness, instead becoming critical of ways in which defensiveness and resentment signified the effects of white racism on their own beliefs and actions. Discussions were conducted in trusting, nonjudgmental environments. One of the teachers explored the thoughts and beliefs of three white student teachers who completed their student teaching in a predominantly Mexican-American school. The other teacher assigned her white student teachers to tutor English language learners in a local public school. Overall, student teachers tended to be eager to share their views on these normally taboo subjects. They were able to develop a more neutral and responsibility-centered language with which to discuss race. They also began to see how their racism affected the children of color they taught. (Contains 82 references.) (SM)

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Sherry Marx and Julie Pennington

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"Experimentations with Critical Race Theory and Teacher Education Students."

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Introduction

We have taken to heart the call of critical theorists such as Scheurich (1993), Delgado (1997), hooks (1997), and others to open up White discourses on White racism. As White, female, teacher educators, we have chosen to openly address Whiteness and White racism with our White preservice students in efforts to help them become more aware of the advantages and biases inherent in their positionality as White teachers. These advantages and biases, together with the ways we Whites consciously and unconsciously perpetuate them, make up the working definition of White racism that we use in this paper (Bell, 1992; Tatum, 1999). In the studies we present here, we have adopted the perspectives of Critical Race Theorists, such as Bell (1992, 1995a, 1995b, 1995c), Delgado (1995a, 1995b, 1995c, 1997), Ladson-Billings (1998, 1999), Nakayama and Krizek (1999), Rains (1998), and Tatum (1999a, 1999b), who posit that American society is highly racialized. We have also adopted the view of Critical White scholars such as Scheurich (1993), Frankenberg, (1993, 1997), Kincheloe and Steinberg (1998), McIntosh (1988/1997), and McIntyre (1997), that Whiteness is a highly privileged social construction, rather than a neutral racial category.

Many scholars in these two critical areas have addressed the racial injustices of our society in theoretical fashion. By doing this, they have laid the groundwork for more applied, empirical endeavors. In the past decade, several scholars in the social sciences (Adams, Bell, & Griffin, 1997; Derman-Sparks, Brunson Phillips, 1997; Frankenberg, 1993, 1997; Helms, 1990; Pack-Brown, 1999; Tatum, 1992, 1994, 1999a, 1999b, 2000), have experimented with, and presented models in, practically addressing racism in their respective fields. Concerning the field of education, Ladson-Billings (1998, 1999) and Tate (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995) recommend the use of Critical Race Theory (CRT), Solorzano (1997) offers a framework using CRT for teaching, and Ortiz and Rhoads (2000) offer suggestions for including the examination of Whiteness in teacher education. However, actual empirical studies that examine Whiteness and White racism in school settings remain in short supply (see Lawrence, 1998; McIntyre, 1997; Obidah & Teel, 2001; Sleeter, 1993). Moreover, while a small number of individual teacher educators have utilized this research in their own work, CRT and Critical White Studies remain outside the parameters of most teacher education programs.

Addressing Whiteness and White Racism in Education

Traditionally, issues of diversity in education are addressed through multicultural education for preservice teachers. This approach tends to broach the issues of racial and ethnic differences by focusing on the diversity children bring with them to the classroom (Sleeter, 1992b). We share the concerns of Sleeter (1992a, 1992b, 1993, 1994, 1995) and McLaren (1995) that traditional multicultural education needs to name and address the implications of Whiteness in education settings, particularly now that Whites account for nearly ninety percent of American teachers and teacher education students (Lara, 1994; Ladson-Billings, 1999), while children of color comprise nearly 50 percent of the American school children population (Lara, 1994).

Those few educators who have begun to address Whiteness and White racism with their teacher education students and the practicing teachers with whom they have worked through an antiracism perspective have found varying degrees of success. Most of these scholars have been disappointed with the outcomes of their studies, pointing to their findings that their students/participants did not develop a significant, critical grasp of their positionalities or the biases that colored their views of their students (Lawrence, 1998; McIntyre, 1997; Sleeter, 1993). We understand through our readings and experiences with White preservice teachers the difficulties inherent in broaching these topics with White students. Examining the experiences of these scholars, we determined that we would attempt to create pedagogies of CRT that would draw the attention of White preservice teachers to their own positionality and help them to become critical of it. However, due to the lack of pedagogical models in teacher education, we

implemented these studies based on our own interpretations of critical White studies, CRT, and our own teaching philosophies and goals.

Avoiding the Pitfalls

As we opened our discussions with our students/participants, we were critically aware of the risky nature of our endeavors. Helms' (1990) highly respected work on White racial identity development emphasizes the benefits of a healthy, positive White identity that is "defined, in part, as a nonracist identity" (p. 49). This White identity is neither characterized by racial superiority nor mired in guilt for the deeds of the White dominant group. Kincheloe and Steinberg (1998) add that a productive White identity is focused on "unlearning racism" and "encouraging insight into the nature of historical oppression and its contemporary manifestations," rather than simply eliciting "feelings of guilt for White racism" (p. 19). However, as Rodriguez (1998) assures us, guilt, "trauma," "unsettlement," and "bafflement" (p. 34) are necessary stages on the journey toward an antiracist White identity. Citing Baldwin (1963), Karp (1981), and Katz (1977), who have written of the negativity associated with White identity, Helms (1990, p. 59) describes the feelings of "depression, helplessness, and anxiety" that often accompany the development of a more critical understanding of race in American. Nonetheless, both Helms, on the one hand, and Kincheloe and Steinberg, on the other, emphasize that these feelings should not be the end result of such a journey because they can be the cause of total immobilization or the "avoidance of environments in which one might encounter [people of color]" (Helms, 1990, p. 60). These reactions are counterproductive to both a positive White identity and an antiracist identity. Thus, in our respective studies, we, the authors, did not take the route of constantly pointing fingers of blame to induce feelings of White guilt in our students. Rather, we realized that simply exploring Whiteness would bring these feelings and the issues attached to them to light. Indeed, in both our studies, the overwhelming feeling of guilt was a very real stage of development we encountered and then sought to move past.

At the same time we sought to move past the generation of guilt and helplessness, we also sought to avoid the generation of dominant culture resentment against cultures of color, an all too possible consequence of addressing race issues. Although contemporary times are frequently considered an era of "colorblindness," a highly racialized country such as the United States with a history enmeshed with slavery and segregation cannot truly practice such a construct as colorblindness (Frankenberg, 1997; Rains, 1998; Sleeter, 1993), at least not at this time. As Sleeter (1993) suggests, "People do not deny seeing what they actually do not see. Rather, they profess to be color-blind when trying to suppress negative images they attach to people of color..." (p. 167). Although these negative images and thoughts usually remain unspoken, attention to Whiteness can reveal them by putting Whites on the defensive. Examining the ways in which White racism manifests itself in Whites and, consequently, affects children of color can lead to denials as well as cautionary explanations as to why these beliefs are actually "true" rather than racist.

At the same time, discussions of affirmative-action policies and the many cultural strengths of cultures of color can also open the door to resentment against what many Whites consider the "special privileges" of color, a phenomenon that Winant (1997) writes has "few precedents in American history" (p.49). In addition, because issues of race are rarely addressed in schools of education across the United States, it is to be expected that most White teacher education students have no practice talking about racial issues in meaningful, productive ways. Thus, they often respond to such discussions in a highly defensive manner that reveals their resentment against people of color and their resistance to discussions of White racism. In our attempts to get our students to open up to discourses of White racism, we tried very hard to help them move past this defensiveness. We also sought to help them become critical of the ways in which this defensiveness and resentment signified the effects of White racism on their own beliefs and actions.

Constructing Goals

Throughout our work with our students, we kept the difficulties and challenges outlined above at the forefront of our minds and at the center of our endeavors. To help avoid these pitfalls, we ensconced our discussions with our students/participants in comfortable, supportive atmospheres where their feelings about people of color in general, and the children of color with whom they worked in particular, could be laid on the table. We also felt that it was very important that we tolerate their biased beliefs and attitudes in the initial stages of our conversations, keeping in mind that most, if not all, of our students/participants had little experience talking critically about race. Thus, it was important to us that we not become offended by our students' words or react in frustration or anger to them when the racism that we could see – but that they

could not – colored their remarks. Rather, we always saw ourselves as teachers and guides who would help our students/participants become more critical of their own beliefs and the ways in which Whiteness and White racism influenced their lives and their teaching. In taking positions as facilitators, we adopted Freire's (1970/2000) notion of dialogue; that is, we relied on reciprocal conversations infused with trust and respect for the dual purpose of reflecting our own teaching philosophies and generating more conversation, more trust, and more respect. Indeed, the more time we spend with our students/participants, the more we learned about them and from them, and the more we learned about ourselves.

At this point, we must emphasize that although we were guides and teachers, we, as White women, were – and are – always influenced by and affected by Whiteness and White racism just as much as our students/participants. As White people, we believe that there is no way to shake off the biases and limitations this imposes on our perspective. However, as researchers and students of Whiteness and White racism, we also realize that we were further ahead on this journey towards understanding than our students who had rarely, if ever, critically addressed these topics before our respective studies. Thus, many aspects of Whiteness and White racism that were invisible to them were visible to us. At the same time, we acknowledge that many more aspects of these entities remain beyond our scope of vision due to our own Whiteness (Chennault, 1998; McIntosh, 1988/1997; Rodriguez, 1998; Giroux, 1998; Proweller, 1998; Scheurich, 1993; Wildman & Davis, 1997). As White researchers we remained critically aware of these limitations as we pressed on in our endeavors.

Our Two Studies

We both confess that we did not know what to expect when we embarked on these endeavors. Honestly, we were nervous. Foremost in our minds were the goals of doing no harm and not making things worse. Consequently, we always proceeded with great caution. Through our two separate but similar studies, we found that we were able to establish ways of talking about Whiteness that moved our students, and ourselves, to a more critical, more empowered understanding of race and Whiteness. Rather than leave our students mired in White guilt, fear, or anger, we hope that we have left them with a critical perspective on the ways in which Whiteness and White racism influence them and American education as well as a desire to change. Most of our students/participants also appeared to leave our studies with a desire to learn more. Of course, they reached these conclusions to varying degrees, and only follow up research can assess whether the resolves to which they came are long lasting. However, these studies did seem to find some measure of success that we will share here. Because so few empirical studies have been done on this topic, we will discuss each of our studies in detail below, follow these descriptions with analysis, and then offer recommendations for future work in this area.

Julie's study began as an exploration of the thoughts and beliefs of a group of three White student teachers who chose to do their student teaching in a school populated mainly by children of color, one in which 98% of the children were of Mexican origin and most were native speakers of Spanish. While all three of these young women patiently and politely listened to their cooperating teachers and studied the issues regarding the children they were teaching, Julie noticed their whisperings in the hall when they were just out of earshot of their teachers. These quietly whispered comments that did not make their way into the regular education discourse intrigued Julie because, 13 years earlier, she had been one of just a few White student teachers in the same school, the school where she decided to stay on as a teacher and where she still taught. Tapping into these quiet whispers, she thought, might be the key to opening up talk about Whiteness and racism. Because Julie's study was an exploratory experiment in opening up such discourse, we present her study first below.

Sherry's study emerged out of a desire to do something about the White racism she had become accustomed to hearing and seeing in and around the parameters of the teacher education class she worked with during her time in graduate school. This class, "Second Language Acquisition" focused on issues surrounding the education of English language learners in the American school system. As a requirement of this class, students were asked to tutor an English language learner in a local public school for 10 hours during the semester. This assignment often gave White students, students who made up the vast majority of the class, their first close contact with an English language learning child of color from a low socioeconomic background. The culture shock that frequently accompanied these first forays into environments where Whites were the minority regularly shaped class discussion. Cultural biases, misunderstandings, and subtle forms of racism routinely colored these conversations. Meeting with

volunteers from the class outside of class time, Sherry was able to map some of the ways in which Whiteness and White racism influenced her students/participants. She also experimented with sharing her findings with participants to gauge the depth of their commitment to their racism and their willingness to change.

Julie's Study – Whispers in the Hall

Opening the Door

I have taught children of color for more than a decade. I am a White teacher. Race is a topic I have heard brought up by educators, school administrators and university professors many times, yet the word Whiteness has been mentioned only in a few of my university graduate courses. Whiteness as a social construction, as a way of understanding the world and the world of schools, was rarely discussed in my experiences in preservice teacher education at my university. During my teacher preparation courses, I recall learning about other cultures and how to teach "them" but my culture and its influences on education and my teaching was never addressed. Years later as a teaching assistant, I sat in on many courses and spoke to preservice teachers about issues they read about or encountered on their school sites. Many of these issues, in my view, were related to their unfamiliarity with the White cultural influences that educators engage in unconsciously and how those influences affect teaching. During this study, my position at the university required me to supervise preservice teachers in their courses and in their field placements in elementary schools. In addition to my university post, I also remained on staff at my elementary school as a reading teacher. After three years of introducing preservice teachers into my own school to intern in classrooms with my fellow teachers, I became interested in directly broaching the topic of race with them.

The intent of my study was to simply bring up the topic of Whiteness with three White preservice teachers completing their field experience semester in the community where I taught for thirteen years. Although the preservice teachers had taken the required multicultural education courses and discussed, at length, cultural issues related to instruction, Whiteness had never been mentioned. As they were White preservice teachers teaching in two neighboring, predominately Latina, schools, I found the absence of dialogue about their feelings disturbing. They were "good students" in class and in their classroom placements. My definition of "good" can be described as their tendency to complete assignments promptly, respond positively to any feedback, and almost always reply to inquiries about their feelings or experiences with a resounding, "Everything is fine." As a preservice teacher myself thirteen years ago at this same school, I remembered feeling a sense of culture shock. I often wondered if the White preservice teachers in my cohort felt any of those feelings. If they did, they never voiced them in class. During class, they spoke about the children and the school, but not about themselves. In my graduate courses we had delved into issues of race and at times we even discussed or read about Whiteness, but in preservice teacher education, it was not mentioned. In contrast, I wanted to bring up the topic of Whiteness; I wanted to hear how they felt. I knew I had been profoundly affected by my graduate school experiences with CRT and I wondered if the preservice teachers I knew would value the information I had gathered.

Therefore, I found myself at an intersection. My knowledge of CRT through my graduate courses was colliding into my supervisory role with future teachers and I was drawn to bring both of the roads I traveled together, but I found no road map. My own interpretations of the research on CRT were all I had to forge the missing link of actually approaching the topic of Whiteness with students on my own. A few small studies had daunting results and recommendations written in veiled warnings of the difficulty in addressing racism, Whiteness and White racism in particular (McIntyre, 1997). My interpretations of CRT and my experiences as a White teacher teaching with fellow White teachers in a school of color, led me to believe that covert (Scheurich, 1993) forms of White racism live in many White teachers. I also believed preservice education should take great pains to approach the topic, however daunting. My own first exposures to CRT had been painful and I sought to avoid "over-teaching" my study participants. The study was not a course, it was an extension of their field experience. I wanted to educate them, but in ways conducive to their individual growth. I knew they had already experienced multicultural classes at the university. In my opinion, the cohort I supervised had not come near to the heart of addressing the grasp White culture has on our school system and the teachers it supports. As I read of CRT and as I worked with veteran teachers and future teachers, I felt an overwhelming need to investigate this area in depth.

Since my three participants, to my knowledge, had not been exposed to the idea of Whiteness or White racism, I attempted to include the topic of Whiteness and White racism within the already existing

structure of my interactions with them. My students had been under my care for more than one year by the time the study began. We had developed relationships during the three previous semesters as I worked as a teaching assistant in their courses. Prior to the study, I had supervised them in their classrooms for one semester, as my study was conducted during their second semester in the schools. My interviews were extensions of our weekly observation debriefings. I observed these three student teachers in their classrooms weekly. Each observation was followed with a discussion of their thoughts about what they were doing and the ways in which I could assist them. Five months of debriefings, backed by the prior semester of coursework, allowed me to have already established a fairly close and open relationship with my participants prior to the study. I also saw two of them informally on a daily basis as we taught in the same school.

The "interviews" were not significantly different from our regular interactions. After they agreed to participate in the study, I did begin to consciously move our discussions to race. Before the onset of the study, I simply told them I was interested in their perceptions about teaching at the schools. Borrowing the research methods of ethnography (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995; Van Maanen, 1988; Wolcott, 1994), I continued to take fieldnotes of their classroom interactions with students and left the interviewing style open. I was not sure what I would find, and I wanted to avoid leading them directly into the topic of race before we began. My questioning strategies varied as I went along, and I quickly found that I had difficulty bringing up race. In my quest for information, I found myself torn. I was very close to these participants. I was a mentor and in some ways a friend. I found that I could not begin to alter our relationships and become only an interviewer. I also found that I wanted to raise the topic gently and ensure that they felt comfortable. In our regular debriefings, I usually let them speak first and I followed. I had always found this to be the best way for me to understand their needs and to try to assist them in their growth as teachers. Once I came to the conversations with an agenda, a topic of my own, I felt a sense of trepidation. Therefore, I found myself instinctually staying within my former role. Our interviews thus remained true to what they had always been. They told me how things were going; I listened. They asked me questions; I told stories to illustrate points. This format allowed me to find some common ground with them. I told them stories about my teaching experiences with children, with parents, or as a student teacher myself. Storytelling became my opening

After a year of portraying myself as a teacher of children of color, full of love and advice and knowledge, I told them my own story about my racism, and it changed everything. My story involved me admitting that I had not been comfortable as a preservice teacher in a school of color. My field experience had been fraught with silence, confusion, and inner struggles. Years ago, I had no one to talk to about the adjustments I was trying to make being a White student teacher in a school whose culture was nothing like my own. As I contemplated telling my story to them, I realized the implications placing myself inside of the study would have. I knew it would mean that I could be leading them to match my stories; I knew my influence on their responses could cause my data to be shaped. I also knew I was taking a risk that might traumatize them. I did it anyway. Whiteness is difficult to bring up. It requires trust and openness. I trusted them with my story. The literature I had become familiar with in my studies had upset me and my classmates at times. Studying Whiteness as a White person opens up a Pandora's Box of issues most Whites have not dealt with, and I did not want my efforts to backfire. Fortunately, however, my efforts had positive results. Telling my story proved to be an appropriate way for me to address Whiteness with this small group of three on a one-on-one basis. I closely monitored their feelings and reactions at all times. I adjusted my stories to theirs, and I was always cautiously navigating my own racism as I attempted to remain a learner along with them.

Once I related my story, my first student reacted immediately. Everyday for months she had smiled and told me everything was going great. The day I shared my story, she met my thoughts with her own. "I definitely know that from when we started in August, I was an outsider. I was such as obvious outsider my first month here. It was horrible. I hated it…I wanted to quit. I didn't want to do this." The other two participants echoed her response to varying degrees. Our stories were not all the same, but the theme of feeling unsure rang through every one of them. For example, another student spoke of how she felt safe, but she noticed she always made sure to close her sunroof as she drove into the neighborhood. We were not in familiar territory.

Thus, we moved to what McIntyre (1997) defines as White talk. While White talk can be viewed as a negative strategy used by Whites to circumvent their own role in perpetuating racism, I felt that it was a useful meeting place for our experiences. We did collude and sympathize with each other to a degree. Our talk was racist in tone at times, but it also gave us background information and a basis for future work. My findings were surprising and yet predictable. Our Whiteness was both easy and difficult to discuss. We heaved sighs of relief, during our "White talk," at being able to say, "Yes, I have felt that way too," and we struggled with our own revealed racism. Indeed, as I navigated my study, I traveled many of the same paths as my subjects. I had not really broached before the topic of my own feelings about being a White teacher in a school of color in such an honest and problem solving way. We untangled our feelings together. I had the advantage of years of teaching in a school of color and more access to the theories and positions others had written about Whiteness, but they had the true honest need to learn about themselves and be the best teachers they could be. We learned and grew together. It was both frightening and liberating. It was also very personal.

We shared a few perspectives in these areas. We all felt our positioning as outsiders in the community. Many times we felt we were confronted by situations where we were not included. Parents would not communicate with us as readily as we hoped they would. One student stated, "I am just an outsider, and I'm coming into their community. I do think they perceive me in a certain manner. I guess I'm just the typical all American White girl." Another student shared her feelings of uncertainty, "that's my biggest fear of teaching in a non-White school...the differences I wouldn't see, but I would be perceived to see, expected to see." The student teachers noticed the daily interactions or lack thereof, another said, "If you are Hispanic or Latino and then you go to a Latino community, they are going to have much more power there than us." The feeling of being without power was pervasive. They were more insecure about communicating with the Latina parents than they would have been with White parents.

Once we had explored our experiences, we began to pose questions about our behaviors and attitudes. I shared a few things I learned in coursework or in my experiences with getting to know parents over the years. I also began to model some of the ways I had learned to think about race through continuing to tell stories about how I learned, and was still learning how to truly listen to parents and children with a refined perspective of myself. My heightened awareness of my positioning, and the ways I both struggled and sought to continue to transform my attitudes was shared, and my students brainstormed with me. I attempted to allow our conversations to be co-constructed; I sought to not be the all-knowing teacher, but rather a searcher as they were. Maybe I had taught longer and maybe I had more theoretical basis for my pondering, but I also had not discussed my feelings this extensively before with those in the same setting. I needed to talk about race as much as they did. We did not find any definitive answers, and that was not my goal. My goal had been to understand how they felt and observe what would happen if I brought up Whiteness.

During the final conversation, I asked them all one question, "How would you change the courses?" They all agreed on one thing, that talking about race, about their White race, is a good thing. This appeared to be the easiest question for them to answer. One student relayed her thoughts, "I'm trained to be so politically correct. I'm really uncomfortable being a White teacher having Hispanic students." They called for moving the discourse to a place where it was safe to talk about race and their own White race in particular without judgment. The pressure of the silence they felt was similar to the pressure I had felt and assumed was there. One student told me, "I was taught not to talk about [race] or make people uncomfortable." Another student stated how the study made her feel, "You are allowed to talk about [race]. You are allowed-having these feelings is acceptable. They are viable feelings. They are real. It is okay to talk about it." I did encourage their agreement with me by the nature of my supervisory role and by letting my opinions be known, but they also demonstrated their own thoughts repeatedly over time. Though unavoidable, I did attempt to eradicate my role as supervisor as much as possible; my last interviews were conducted after the semester was over. I was no longer their official supervisor.

Racism and the place where it intersects with White identity in preservice teachers is a destination I sought. There are no models to lift and deliver to preservice teacher programs; only educating preservice educators will change the way race is addressed. Did I reach my goal? Yes, my results show that you can discuss Whiteness and race with White teachers and make it a positive experience. Did I go far enough? No, by no means. All that I did was test the waters and I found a willingness and a need for them to be allowed

to unravel their feelings under the guidance of a mentor. The next steps lie in taking the exploration into areas of greater understandings of the macro-level, institutional, and historical constructions of race and the ways schools and teachers play important parts in White racism.

Sherry's Study

Mapping and Naming Whiteness and White Racism

Like most teacher education students, the students in the class I taught, "Second Language Education," were very eager to work with children. They rarely minded putting in the extra 10 hours of tutoring required for the class, and many students met the 10-hour requirement early in the semester, but continued with their tutees until the end of the school year. As a teacher educator, I was usually very proud of my students. I regularly witnessed the sensitivity, thoughtfulness, altruism, and sincere love for children and teaching that distinguished nearly all of them. At the same time, however, I also regularly witnessed cultural biases, racism, and low expectations for the children that my students were required to tutor. These attributes of the same students were revealed in occasionally brash, but usually subtle, ways (see Marx, 2000). Because the tutoring experience was often their first experience working with children who were very different from themselves culturally, linguistically, economically, and racially, most students in the Second Language Acquisition class had little experiential or tacit knowledge to help them make sense of the situation. Very often, perhaps without even realizing it, they relied on popular stereotypes and deficit thinking (see Valencia, 1997) to construct their images of the children they barely knew, yet readily judged. These are the ways in which Whiteness and White racism influence even the most "open-minded" future teachers to the detriment of the children they seek to teach.

In this study, then, my goal was twofold. First I sought to map the ways in which the preservice teachers with whom I worked seemed to be influenced by Whiteness and White racism. Second, I sought to draw the attention of study participants to the influences I had mapped in the hopes of fostering some changes. Nine White women in the Second Language Acquisition class volunteered to participate in this study. Most students/participants were 20 to 21 years old, but the age range spread up to 35. Participants and I met from three hours to more than 10 hours over the course of the semester, depending on their desires to talk. All interviews were open-ended (Lincoln & Guba, 1989), informal, and conducted in casual places such as a local coffee shop or my living room. Interviews were reciprocal as well (see Frankenberg, 1993; Henry, 1998; Schulz, 1997); that is, I responded to participant comments and emotions with my own. Without centering the study on myself, I nevertheless let participants know that I shared their struggles and many of their questions. In addition to interviews, I also collected tutoring journals (see Black, Sileo, & Prater, 2000; Collier, 1999) from all students in the class, paying special attention to those of the nine students/participants. I observed each participant tutoring once, and I also tutored an English language learning child during the semester of data collection.

Like Julie, I entered these waters with much trepidation. However, it was relatively easy to open up discussions of teaching, children of color, and English language learners because these topics were very much on the minds of my participants. Indeed, general questions such as, "Tell me about your student," or "Tell me about X Elementary," often triggered hours of conversation about the differences participants saw between themselves and the children they tutored. Although they often claimed to "love" these children, they nevertheless revealed low expectations, heavy reliance upon deficit thinking, and striking misjudgments of family life, language skill, and intelligence. Many of them "felt sorry" for the children they tutored but barely knew and based these feelings on imagined family lives and misinterpretations of skills.

Rachel[1], for example, described one child she met for just one 30-minute session as having an "apathetic attitude" toward English and education altogether. Crucial to her judgment was the fact that this child, Miguel, did not speak during their time together. In her journal, she wrote that, "I saw a child who was not proficient in even his native language, let alone in English" (Interview No. 4 with Rachel). Since she spoke no Spanish and, in their time together, neither did Miguel, there was no way for Rachel to know this. Making a similar misjudgment, Elizabeth characterized her tutee as "insecure" and "trying to be something he's not" because he read "too quickly" (Interview No. 1 with Elizabeth). She felt that he was trying to "prove that he knew everything" and that he was trying to make himself "out to be something he, you know,[he is not]." What Elizabeth did not know was that Martin was a fourth grader reading on a second grade level in the tutoring lab due to the mistakes of the tutoring director. Rather

than being insecure, he was very self-confident and wanted to show off his ability to his tutors. I know this because, by coincidence, Martin was the child that I tutored weekly. Because he sailed through the second and third grade books, I finally talked with the tutoring director who agreed to move him up to the fourth grade level where he still read strongly. Elizabeth's misjudgments, and the tutoring director's, had a direct, negative effect on Martin's schooling.

At the same time they judged their tutees as living lives full of deficits in everything from home environments and culture to intelligence and civility, these same young women described themselves in terms of benevolent, naturally-occurring personal assets that would, without question, benefit the lives of any children with whom they worked. This uncritical, unquestioned view of the self is a direct example of the "invisible privileges" (McIntosh, 1988/1997) entangled with Whiteness. Just as children of color are nearly always constructed to be "at-risk," "disadvantaged," and "in need" (see Valencia, 1997), White preservice teachers tend to be constructed – and to construct themselves – as just the opposite: overflowing with intelligence, virtue, civility, and any other kind of role model-type quality needed to benefit children. Several preservice teachers I have known have cited just these reasons for pursuing careers in teaching. With this justification for becoming teachers, it is no wonder that so many teachers working with children of color consider their work a generous act of charity. When their patience wears thin, when they are tired of being martyrs, they request transfers to the White-dominated suburbs. Indeed, of the nine participants in this study, only one hoped to teach in a school like that where she tutored, populated primarily by children of color, after graduation. The rest were already sending off applications to the suburbs. Several actually used the word "charity" to describe their work with English language learners during our semester together.

These examples are just a few of many that, when categorized, revealed a devastating picture of loving, caring, White, female, preservice teachers strongly influenced by, and readily perpetuating, White racism. These women were not "hood-wearing Klan member[s] or name-calling Archie Bunker figure[s]" (Tatum, 1999, p. 11). In fact, they were much the opposite: They were lovely young women devoted to spending their careers tolerantly and benevolently working with "all children." However, one could argue that the ways in which they perpetuated racism were even more destructive than the hateful, violent rants of a White supremacist. After all, White teachers number in the millions in this country and the brand of racism they/we perpetuate is viewed as helpful, knowledgeable, and in the best interest of the children. Hardly ever is it passionately attacked and disrupted by the majority of Americans, as happens routinely with the public words of Klan members and Aryan Nation affiliates.

The second stage of this study, then, was an effort to disrupt the White racism and Whiteness that affected participants by calling attention to it in a gentle but firm manner so that participants could finally see it in some capacity. Because of their strong abhorrence of "active" (Tatum, 1999, p. 11), hate-inspired forms of racism and because of their desires to be loving, excellent teachers for all students, I hoped that once they could see their racism, they would be willing to mitigate it by any means possible.

Here is where the study became much more difficult. As Julie described earlier, there are few models for undertaking such a project in education. Thus, I looked outside the parameters of our field for advice, and finally adopted a modified version of intervention ethnography, known in educational anthropology as "cultural therapy." This approach, practiced first and most often by George and Louise Spindler (see Spindler & Spindler, 1982, 1990, 1993, 1994; Spindler, 1997, 1999), is used to make visible the usually invisible aspects of one's culture. As Spindler (1999) explains, "The job of the cultural therapist is to discover what the subject does not know and... then to help the subject to understand and reflect on these discoveries" (p. 470). I call the approach I took in this study "critical cultural therapy" because I added a critical, race-oriented focus to the "culture" the Spindlers spent much of their careers examining. I viewed racism as an inevitable aspect of the dominant White culture that necessarily influenced the beliefs of my participants and myself. My goal as a "critical cultural therapist" was to help participants become aware of the ways in which the Whiteness and the racism that were invisible to them influenced their beliefs about, and their interactions with, the English language learning children of color they tutored.

I did this first by sharing the transcripts of our conversations with participants after we had met a few times and gotten to know each other for several weeks during the semester. The trust and respect we developed during our conversations created a foundation that became crucial to these later attempts at

intervention. Participants took the transcripts home, studied them, and contacted me when they were ready to meet about what they had seen in their own words. Because we had spent so much time talking about race and racism already, they were focused on these issues when they read their transcripts. I imagine that most of them hoped they would not "sound" as racist as the family members and friends they had spent a great deal of time describing in contrast to their own "open-mindedness" and tolerance.

To their surprise, and I must admit to my own, most participants were able to name many instances of their own racism and the ways in which it affected the children they tutored when they saw it somewhat objectified in their transcripts. Rachel, for example, emphasized that she thought she had entered her tutoring situation with "no expectations" when now she realized that she had clearly entered it with very low expectations. She repeatedly said that she sounded like a "snob" in her transcripts and stressed how disappointed she was with herself. She told me later that she just could not stop thinking about it. Similarly, Elizabeth was stunned that, while she "totally" agreed with one of her college professors that she should never pre-judge children and never construct low expectations for them, she caught herself doing just that. Indeed, as she realized this she exclaimed, "I sit here and listen to myself, and it's freaking me out!" (Interview No. 2 with Elizabeth). After she read her transcripts, Claire was likewise amazed at herself, commenting, "I'm racist. That's probably about all I have to say! I am definitely, definitely racist" (Interview No. 4 with Claire).

As these comments show, actually seeing the racism in their own words made a strong impression on most participants. The transcripts were very helpful tools for transforming theory into practice. Rather that continuing to view racism as an entity that was "out there" affecting others, through this exercise, they were able to catch a glimpse of it influencing their own thoughts and behaviors. However, for most participants, this glimpse was immediately followed by denials. For example, Rachel explained, "I'm sure [racism] affects me. But, I don't think it *negatively* affects me" (Interview No. 3 with Rachel). Making a similar point, Michelle agreed that she was "being racist," but then explained that, "I felt like I was being more honest than racist" (Interview No. 3 with Michelle). Several students/participants emphasized that they were good people, and, even if they were racist, they were much less racist than most other people.

My role as a critical cultural therapist, at this point, was to push participants past these denials by continuously, but gently and respectfully, pulling attention back to the ways in which their own words implicated them in White racism. Sometimes I drew attention to the words in their transcripts; sometimes I drew attention to the words they had just spoken. One major question to which I drew their attention was whether they could still be good people and racist. Through this angle, denials eventually gave way to promises to "be more aware," promises that I again had to challenge by drawing attention to their superficiality and their many limitations. As the study developed, I realized that my goals changed, rather than just guiding participants to an awareness of their own racism, I wanted them to admit their own White racism and then to take responsibility for it. Calmly, gently, but relentlessly drawing attention to it moved most, but not all, participants to this point.

Elizabeth, for example, became very critical of not only her own role in perpetuating White racism, but the role of the standard White-dominated curriculum as well. By the end of the study, she was searching our city for materials centered on a variety of cultural and ethnic perspectives. Ashley, who began the study ashamed of, but cognizant of, her prejudices towards Latina/os, passionately stated toward the end that, "I want to be a teacher like Scheurich [1998] talks about – I know I have my biases, I know I'm not like that now – but, I want to be a teacher like that who believes all students can succeed" (Interview No. 3 with Ashley). Like Elizabeth, Ashley also began to notice the White-dominated curriculum, even in the bilingual classes she visited, and vowed that her own future classroom would be different. Coming to a different kind of resolve, Michelle recognized the missionary-type attitude that colored all her dealings with people of color. Realizing the biases and condescension in this attitude, she began catching herself in this way of thinking and trying to change. By the end of our semester together, she referred to her tutees as her "role models," a radical change from her early belief that she would unquestionably be a good role model for them. Of the nine participants, seven moved to this state of critical self-awareness and desire to do more. One continued to deny her racism throughout our time together, referring to racism as "ridiculous" and "silly," something she would "never" feel (Interview No. 3 with Becky). This characterization made it even harder for her to admit her own racism. Another

student/participant was willing to admit her "prejudices" but unwilling to name her own racism or take responsibility for it. During our conversations, I kept thinking that a little more time might have been all that was needed to move these two young women forward.

In reflecting on my goals and the ways in which they changed over the course of the study, I realize now how important it was that I actively draw attention to the racism of my participants. Drawing attention to their own words and their own inconsistencies forced the young women in this study to name their own racism. Once they did this, they were able to see the ways in which their own actions and words perpetuated racism at both the micro and macro levels. Discovering this connection between their own seemingly innocuous words and beliefs and the larger ills of society suddenly implicated them in racism – an entity they abhorred and of which they wanted no part. This connection became catalyst for change for most participants in this study. However, only time will tell how long these resolves last for each participant. As Helms (1990) warns, it is very hard for a White person to stay on her path to antiracism as other Whites continuously seek to disrupt such a journey. Thus, longitudinal studies that explore the tenacity of the results such as those I present here are highly recommended.

Findings of the Two Studies

Similarities

In these two separate studies, we found similarities and differences that shed more light on the complexities, and yet the necessity, of examining racism. The similarities were numerous and include the following. First, despite our initial trepidation at broaching the topics of Whiteness and White racism with our students/participants, we found that nearly all of them were very eager to share their views about these normally taboo subjects when discussions were ensconced in supportive, trusting, dialogical conversations. Likely because of the culture shock that accompanied their experiences in schools dominated by children of color, they were sincerely eager to talk about these issues. As Megan explained, "You're not going to argue with me or get upset about what I say. It's kind of a more . . . calm environment to talk about it" (Interview No. 3 with Megan). And, as Elizabeth emphasized, "I'll be glad to talk about it anytime. I mean, I *like* talking about it" (Interview No. 1 with Elizabeth). In addition, some students/participants shared that they were actually grateful for these discussions. They really needed them.

A second important finding was that, through our dialogues, students/participants and we researchers were able to develop a less politicized, more neutral, and more responsibility-centered language with which to talk about race and race issues. As our participants grew comfortable discussing their racism in the language of CRT, we were surprised at how easily they referred to "my racism," and "the kind of racism I have." Moreover, as they were able to talk about it in a less constrained, more fluent manner, they became more critical of it. Instead of not seeing White racism at all, they began to see it everywhere, even within themselves. As they became critical of it, many of them began to devise ways in which to do something about it.

Our third finding was that, through this new language of, and understanding of, White racism and Whiteness, students/participants finally began to see the ways in which their racism affected the children of color with whom they worked. They began to realize that deficit thinking (see Valencia, 1997) had been the primary shaper of their earlier thoughts about their students. Over time, in both studies, most participants became highly critical of the ways in which they constructed their beliefs about the children. Many even expressed their disappointment with themselves and their shock at the pervasiveness of deficit thinking in everything from their teacher education classes, to the media, to their own home lives. Although it is not possible to quantitatively measure their changes in beliefs, our close contact and frequent discussions with our students/participants led us to believe that many of them had made sincere changes in their attitudes.

A fourth shared finding was that all of our students/participants tended to associate goodness with nonracist identities. Thus, naming racism within themselves was at first cause for great alarm. This is the point where guilt, fear, and even trauma came into the picture. Because they viewed goodness and racism as a dichotomy, their first glimpse of their own racism led them to the conclusion that they must be horrible people. It seemed that in coming to terms with their own racism, our students/participants necessarily had to make the connection that they could be good people and still be racist. This new realization blows away the notion that racism is only hate mongering. Even the nicest, sweetest, most loving teachers can still be racist. Moreover, despite their altruistic hearts and their efforts to "hide" their

racism, it is still possible for their racism to hurt the children they teach. An interesting effect of this discovery was that all the young women who made this recognition strongly wanted to change. Their desires to be "good people" helped move them toward more antiracist identities.

Differences

In addition to our similar findings, we also discovered some that were quite different. These differences offer some insight into the many possible ways Whiteness and White racism can be addressed with preservice teachers. They also offer more illumination of the complexities involved in this kind of research. The most significant difference in our findings was our dissimilar perspectives on the issue of power. Through examining our differences in this area, we learned that, as researchers, we had differing views of power, and through our studies, different experiences with it, that shaped the ways we approached this issue in our studies.

In her study, Julie and her participants became vividly aware of their power and privilege as members of the White, dominant society. Once they spent time in their school's communities of color, they began to see their power and privilege through the eyes of the parents and children of the school. They understood their place as outsiders while at the same time they still moved within the White culture of power. They could make crucial decisions about the children's schooling, but they could not communicate effectively with the parents. Therefore, they lived with the two-sided perspective of being powerful and powerless. They lacked the cultural knowledge to be effective in the classroom and to be effective in interacting with parents. Throughout the conversations, issues of power were discussed and this was troubling to them yet led them to be open to trying to eradicate their racism. Although, participants grew to understand their positionality, Julie was unable to move them into deeper exploration of how to move beyond the mere feeling of powerlessness. They did take the first steps toward recognizing the role racism plays in teaching. The scope of the study was small and exploratory; therefore, the excavating necessary to solve deeper issues was not attempted.

The issue of power most salient in Sherry's study was the intriguing finding that students/participants who admitted their racism and took responsibility for it seemed to become empowered by the new sense of responsibility they developed. Using Ashcroft's (1987) definition of empowerment, many of them developed a "belief in [their] ability/capability to act with effect" (p. 145). Using McLaren's (1989) definition, they learned "to critically appropriate knowledge existing outside their immediate experience in order to broaden their understanding of themselves, the world, and the possibilities for transforming the taken for granted assumptions about the way we live" (p. 186). In Freire's (1970/2000) words, participants developed "conscientizaçâo," that is, they developed a critical consciousness "that is understood to have the power to transform reality" (Taylor, 1993, p. 52). By better understanding their cultural and racial positionality, the power that accompanies this positionality, and the biases this positionality inevitably generated in their beliefs about English language learning children of color, most of the young women in this study set a course for becoming much better teachers for all the children who will someday populate their classrooms.

The scope of this second study, which involved not only mapping, but also confronting racism, is likely the factor that led to this appearance of empowerment. While White students/participants at first felt debilitated by their recognition of White privilege and White racism, and their relationships to them, through further dialogue, they eventually moved on to this more productive use of the power they recognized. It was in this manner that they seemed to become empowered.

Both of us, Sherry and Julie, recognize the limitations to our studies. Both studies were small, with just nine and three participants, respectively. Either of these studies adapted for classroom use would have to be transformed greatly to suit the dynamics a classroom would offer. Moreover, we realize that, although our initial results seem positive, only follow up research can truly determine their effectiveness. It is quite possible that the firm resolves to become antiracist educators faded from the priorities of our students/participants soon after the studies finished. We therefore recommend further research in this area so that the small body of empirical studies of Whiteness and White racism continues to grow.

Implications for Teacher Education

In light of our findings, we propose that all teacher preparation programs allow room for the study of Whiteness as it impacts teaching and teachers. Whiteness has been avoided in teacher preparations

programs due to the perceptions that it is either immaterial or "dangerous". Rather than taking this approach, we suggest that Whiteness and White racism be introduced as a necessary component of any discussion of children and teachers. In opening up these discussions, we suggest that teacher educators offer support, guidance, and a certain degree of research-based knowledge (see Titone, 1998). In order to do this, teacher educators must become familiar enough with the body of work on CRT, Whiteness, White racism, and White identity development to do more good than harm.

We also recommend that teacher educators attempting similar interventions be aware that progress and growth vary for individuals and that one rigid model cannot suit the needs of all. As we both found, these experimentations with racial identity development and coming to terms with White racism must begin wherever the instructors and students are at the time. Expecting a radical, measurable transformation in a short period of time is unrealistic given the complexity of the task at hand. Moreover, we cannot emphasize enough that trusting, respectful environments where students/participants are encouraged to share their true feelings are critical to the development of these kinds of conversations. Just as critical is the leadership teacher educators need to offer when they dare to raise these topics (see Titone, 1998). Without these important foundations, attempts to recognize Whiteness can easily become precarious, forcing students/participants back to the safety, ethnocentricity, and immobility of their own White culture (Helms, 1990).

With that said, we must also emphasize how important it is that we, as White teacher educators, overcome our own fears of entering these dialogues on Whiteness and White racism. Much of the work on Whiteness implies that the construct is too controversial, too risky, and too complex to be usefully addressed with undergraduates. We understand these concerns, but we also see the number of White pre-teachers teaching and observing in classrooms populated by children of color every day, and we hear its effects in whispers and bold questions in the classes we teach. We also see its effects on the children with whom these pre-teachers work. Thus, we are strongly moved to encourage more research and more experimentation in this area. Only when we are brave enough to undertake this kind of controversial, risky work with our students and to fortify ourselves with the knowledge and skills we need to lead, will we be able to foster the necessary changes. Without this courage, our children of color will continue to be the ones left to absorb the truly destructive effects of White racism

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[1] All names of students/participants are pseudonyms.

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